



BREAK FREE FROM PLASTIC POLLUTION ACT

*Introduced by Senator Tom Udall
and Representative Alan Lowenthal*

The American people are fed up with the plastic pollution crisis. They are demanding a bold, comprehensive response. **The Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act** is the national strategy we need to tackle the tidal wave of plastic pollution and chart a new course for the future.

Plastic pollution has exploded into a global crisis that threatens our public health, economic security, and the future of our planet. Plastic pollution is everywhere – from the highest mountain peaks to the bottom of our oceans, and even inside our own bodies.

- Studies suggest that humans swallow a credit card's worth of plastic every week. Exposure to plastic toxins has been linked to cancers, birth defects, and other ailments.
- The United States disposes or incinerates 32 million tons of plastic waste each year, burdening our local government budgets and overwhelming systems to handle it. 334 thousand tons are directly littered.
- Every year, enough plastic waste – about 8 million tons – escapes into the oceans to cover each foot of coastline in the world in five garbage bags full of trash.
- Our recycling system is broken: just 8% of plastic waste in the United States is sorted for recycling. The recycling in our blue bins is often landfilled, incinerated, or shipped overseas to countries that are unable to manage this waste.
- Global plastic production will triple by 2050, accounting for 20% of global oil consumption.
- Plastic production facilities are super-polluters and a major contributor to climate change: emissions linked to plastic will reach 1.3 billion tons by 2030, equal to 300 coal-fired power plants.

The *Break Free from Plastic Pollution Act* will provide badly-needed national leadership – reducing the amount of wasteful plastic and reforming our broken waste and recycling collection system. It will shift the burden of cleanup to where it belongs: on the corporations that produce this waste:

- Require big corporations take responsibility for their pollution, requiring producers of plastic products to design, manage, and finance waste and recycling programs.
- Spur innovation, incentivizing big corporations to make reusable products and items that can actually be recycled.
- Create a nationwide beverage container refund program, which is successful at the state level.
- Reduce and ban certain single-use plastic products that are not recyclable.
- Establish minimum recycled content requirements for beverage containers, packaging, and food-service products.
- Spur massive investments in U.S. domestic recycling and composting infrastructure, while pressing pause on new plastic facilities until critical environment and health protections are put in place.

Let's come together to tackle plastic pollution with the bold action we need – before it's too late.